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MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 1920.

MAKING A MISTAKE.

When the present administration took over the management of city affairs it was recognized by everyone that the members had a man's job and that the finances of the city were and would be in a desperate condition. The saloon licenses were cut off and costs in every direction mounting to unprecedented figures. Prices have been mounting higher and higher ever since, with resources of revenue remaining much the same. There is but one solution, which everyone recognizes, if the necessary work of the city is to be carried on, and that is that city taxes must be higher. This is all the more necessary because many things were deterred with the hope that conditions would improve and prices and labor costs drop. The reverse has been the case, and the condition must be met.

It is, therefore, a mistake to endeavor to attempt to cover up or conceal any of the facts from the people. Mayor Weeks' pre-election platform should be carried out to the letter, and all "secret sessions" cut out. This does not mean that the council and mayor should not confer with each other informally, especially with regard to city appointments and actions suggested by different members, but contemplated action of any importance should be given the public in time to fully understand and thresh matters out before the thing is actually "put over." And thorough explanations should be made when asked for, or if deemed necessary by the people or anyone affected.

Two recent conspicuous examples of the fallacy of this kind of action were the passing of the soft drink license ordinance and of the annual appropriation ordinance, which involved a substantial increase, without proper publicity and open discussion or explanation in advance. In the case of the former much trouble might have been avoided and possibly a better ordinance framed up, which would be more satisfactory all around. Regarding the annual appropriation ordinance, its presentation and discussion in open council, with an explanation of certain increases, would have saved considerable unpleasant comment and criticism. That the appropriations for the coming year must be larger was expected by any thinking man. Why, therefore, not give the public the facts in advance and let them know the whys and wherefores before they learned the facts and through the "official" publication. The public are accustomed to depend upon the papers for the items of news value from the council meetings. It is the duty of the council to assist the "news bounds" in obtaining the facts in cases of as much importance as this and not compel them to dig them out themselves as best they can after the ordinance is passed. The news publication would be more accurate and it would "look better" all around.

Another example of the mistaken policy of the council (not to say childishness in this case) was the holding up of the appointments of the members of the trustees of Roddick's library board and referring the question as to how they should be appointed to the attorney general, involving an unnecessary and serious delay when there was no occasion. The law is explicit and calls for the appointment of trustees by the mayor and approval by the council. Some alleged "agreement" in the council body seems to have been violated and the appointments were held up. Not because the mayor or any commissioner had any objection to any name submitted, but because the ethics in the case had not been complied with. Here is a bunch of men who give their time and energy to the management of one of the most important and far-reaching of the city's institutions without any remuneration whatever (except to the secretary, who does a pile of work for a mere pittance), and they are seriously handicapped because these appointments are not made because of no reason except that someone's importance was overlooked. At present of the nine trustees who are supposed to "hold over," one is dead, one is on the other edge of the continent, one is necessarily out of the city much of the time, leaving six members, three of whose terms have expired from whom to get a quorum of five to transact the most necessary business. If any member happens to be out of the city and one other cannot be present everything is sewed up—even the payment of current bills. This is not fair to the trustees, nor to people connected with or doing business with the library.

It is time to "come clean." There is no desire to criticize the council's management of finances or any of the city's business. The commissioners have done well, and the confidence of the people in their ability to handle big things was attested by the large majority given recently in voting on the proposed bond issues. But they can help themselves and stand better with the public if they lay all cards on the table and above all cut out petty squabbles among themselves.

Why Rates for the Service Furnished by the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois Had to be Raised

NO one needs to be reminded that beginning with the Fall of 1914, prices for labor and material of all kinds began to advance, and this advance has been continuous. During this period of nearly six years, this Company has operated its properties without increasing its rates, EXCEPT FOR WHOLESALE POWER, WHOLESALE GAS AND HEATING SERVICE. IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS ONLY BY THE PRACTICE OF THE MOST RIGID ECONOMY AND UTILIZATION OF THE MOST ECONOMIC UNITS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF BOTH ELECTRICITY AND GAS.

IN ORDER THAT THE COMPANY MIGHT CONTINUE TO RENDER ADEQUATE SERVICE TO ITS CUSTOMERS, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE POLICY OF SELLING ITS PRODUCT AT PRE-WAR PRICES COULD NOT LONGER BE PURSUED, AND THAT THE SELLING PRICE OF ITS PRODUCT MUST BE INCREASED. ACCORDINGLY UPON OUR APPLICATION, FILED MAY 6, 1920, THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF ILLINOIS, BY ORDER ENTERED JULY 31, 1920, (CASES 10569, 10570 AND 10579), HAS GRANTED AN INCREASE IN OUR ELECTRIC, GAS AND WATER RATES, EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 1920.

THE COMMISSION, AFTER CONSIDERATION OF THE EVIDENCE SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF OUR APPLICATION, SAID IN ITS ORDER:

"Principal among the contentions advanced by the petitioner in support of its application for higher rates is the marked increase in operating expenses brought about by the great advance in the costs of labor and materials. In 1919 the Company used approximately 440,000 tons of boiler coal, 32,000 tons of gas coal, 56,000 tons of water gas generator fuel, and 10,000,000 gallons of enriching oil. A year ago bituminous

coal for boiler fuel cost \$3.50 a ton at the plants of the company as compared with a present cost of \$4.48 a ton and an estimated cost after Aug. 1, 1920, of about \$4.86 a ton. The company claims it is enabled to secure coal at somewhat less than the market price because of its interest in the mines of the Big Muddy Fuel Company in Williamson County, Illinois, and the Indiana Hocking Coal Company in Sullivan, Indiana.

Until April, 1920, the Company purchased an excellent quality of Kanawha coke for use as generator fuel at a price of \$4.75 per ton at the ovens. This grade of coke can no longer be secured, and the company is now purchasing Connellsville Coke at \$15.50 per ton at the ovens, equivalent to about \$17.90 at the various plants.

Gas oil of superior quality which sold for 2 or 3 cents a gallon in the period from 1911 to 1915 can not now be secured, and the company is forced to use an inferior grade known as fuel oil, and even this can be obtained only with difficulty at prices varying from 10 to 12 cents a gallon for necessary oil purchased on the open market.

THE POLICY OF THIS COMPANY from its beginning and up until the Fall of 1914 HAD BEEN TO REDUCE THE RATES FOR ITS SERVICE. AS SOON AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO MATERIALLY REDUCE ITS COSTS SERVICE, THIS COMPANY WILL REQUEST THE AUTHORITIES HAVING CHARGE OF RATES TO AUTHORIZE A LOWER RATE THAN THE RATE NOW IN EFFECT.

BECAUSE OF THE SCARCITY AND EXTREMELY HIGH PRICE OF BOILER FUEL AND GAS MAKING SUPPLIES, WE EARNESTLY URGE ALL OF OUR CUSTOMERS TO EXERCISE THE UTMOST ECONOMY IN THE USE OF OUR SERVICE. IF THEY ADOPT THIS COURSE, IT WILL NOT ONLY HELP US, BUT IT WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD HELPING THEM IN TAKING CARE OF THE INCREASE IN THE RATES.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS